



YOU THOUGHT
MONTREAL WAS BAD FOR
RENAMING STREETS?
Try post-soviet Russia!

by Aubrey Cohen • see back page

Women are an NDP Priority

by Tara Charran • see page 8



BLACK WRITERS
CONGRESS REVISITED

PART TWO OF A SERIES

by Dave Austin • see page 3

THE MCGILL DAILY

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On the Gregorian calendar since 1911

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1993



DAILY PHOTO BY VALÉRIE JODOIN-KEATON

An early-morning rally at Hydro-Québec headquarters drew about forty protesters yesterday. Hydro executives were expected to announce the corporation's commitment to the controversial SM-3 dam megaproject on the Ste. Marguerite River in northern Québec. The dam will entail dire environmental consequences and invade the Innu Nation's land. The Alliance for Non-Violent Action and the Regroupement de Solidarité avec les Autochtones organized the demonstration.

Education and Unemployment merger? New ministry to link the two

BY SIMONA CHIOSE

TORONTO (CUP) — The federal government's newly-created Ministry of Human Resources could turn universities into training schools for big business, critics are warning.

Under the new ministry, headed by Bernard Valcourt, post-secondary education is part of a portfolio which also includes unemployment insurance payments, labour policy, employment training for immigrants and provincial transfer payments directed at social assistance.

The ministry was created by Prime Minister Kim Campbell when she took power in June. Policies dealing with post-secondary education were previously addressed

by the department of the Secretary of State.

According to a government document, the new portfolio is aimed at building "the mobile, educated and skilled workforce needed for Canada's international competitiveness." While policies towards that objective are still being developed, Yamilée Dupont, a spokesperson for the Secretary of State department, said they will probably focus on improving marketable skills.

"This [the Human Resources] department will provide better linkages between training and education and the current and future needs of the labour market," said

Continued on Page 2

Women will lose most from cuts to social programs National Action Committee critical of tory plans

BY KRISTEN BOON

Sunera Thobani, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), unabashedly slammed the Tory Government for its proposed cuts to social programs. Thobani spoke at McGill on Thursday night in conjunction with the Canadian Campus Safety Conference.

The thrust of Thobani's attack was on Kim Campbell's deficit reduction scheme.

"The crisis in this country is one of unemployment, of poverty, and of inequality. The focus on the deficit is a misleading one," she said, adding that the social consequences of reducing the deficit should be considered.

Thobani argued that women will be the losers if social programs are cut because these projects have traditionally furthered equality rights.

"This deficit reduction hysteria has so skewed where we stand at this moment in history that in cutting back on social programs' funding, what is being attacked is equality rights," said Thobani. "Social programs ensure that everybody in society, regardless of income, has the right to education and housing. Funding cuts mean this very principle of universal access is being attacked - social programs ensure a redistribution of resources."

NAC is the largest women's organization in Canada. It acts as an umbrella group for 550 women's groups, comprising 750 000 members. Putting women's issues on the political agenda is central to NAC's mandate. Although

their election strategy is to evaluate issues, not parties, they hardly take a non-partisan approach.

Critics say this political entrenchment is compromising NAC's project. The national vice-president of REAL Women of Canada, Gwen Landolt, told the *Financial Post* that NAC's policies are too extreme for them to be representative of Canadian Women. "Any one of their policies without exception is identical to NDP policies," said Landolt.

In an interview with the *Daily* Thobani defended NAC's stance. "We aren't accountable to any political party. That is one of our best strengths."

In a survey of 10 000 people undertaken by NAC, 90 per cent said they relied on NAC for independent information.

While NAC's selection slogan "Equality is the bottom line" links them ideologically to the NDP in its recognition of the power structures of society, Thobani asserts that NAC has maintained its independence.

Taking stands on NAFTA, affirmative action programs, and immigration policies, NAC has been successful at putting women's issues on the political agenda.

Women and work are prominent themes in NAC's mandate. Thobani said that in Ottawa, gender issues are misguided. Speculations about Kim Campbell's ability to pull female votes is the only issue being debated.

"There is no discussion about the poverty of women, reproductive rights,

national child care programs, and violence against women. Women want to see these issues addressed and want parties to make their platforms clear," she added.

The implementation of a national day care program is of particular concern to NAC. According to Thobani, a daycare program "would support equality rights of women, and make it possible for women who don't have access to childcare to go and participate in the economy. National daycare would support women's struggles for equality." To date only the NDP has pledged to create such a childcare system.

Violence against women is also isolated as an area requiring serious attention, and Thobani commended the conference on Campus Safety. "Safety for women is a very serious problem, and the government is doing very little to promote policies for safety. In fact it is attacking the organizations which are addressing this problem."

Thobani was extremely critical of the report released in July by the Canadian Panel on Violence against Women. Entitled *Changing the Landscape: Ending the Violence, Achieving Equality*, the report has sparked a bitter feud amongst various public interest groups and government departments because of the \$10 million tab it rang up. Thobani said this inquiry was a waste of government

money because it duplicated the work of many other reports, and ignored areas of vital concern.

Unemployment among women, estimated at 20 per cent in the NAC annual general report released in July, requires serious government initiatives. According to this report the labour force participation rate for women is declining for the first time. Thobani says this reflects the fact that women are being pushed out of the workplace.

The 15-24 age group is most affected by these conditions. Research also revealed that two-thirds of part-time workers in the paid workforce are women. These women do not receive benefits

group of women are exposed to sexual harassment because they are often forced to live in their employer's house."

Several members of the audience echoed these concerns, and called for greater support on behalf of domestic workers.

NAC has been trying to increase the diversity of its membership over the past years. Often criticized in the past for its white middle class composition, NAC is now emphasizing the active involvement of many women of color in its ranks.

Sylvia Bashevin of the University of Toronto told the *Financial Post* in July that NAC has been one of the most successful social interest groups to broaden its image. "NAC was trying to move away from what it is seen as nationally: too white, too Toronto-based, too affluent."

Thobani, however, expressed frustration over the fact that when she took over NAC's presidency from Judy Rebick in July, the media focused almost exclusively on her Tanzanian background, "as if that was the only change taking place in NAC."

Collectivity in the women's movement is the driving ideal of NAC's program. "If polarization sets up individual women against collective rights, it is very dangerous."

Thobani castigated the Conservative government for encouraging this divisiveness. "The Tory policies have had a devastating effect on the lives of women in this country."

"Tory policies have had a devastating effect on lives of women in this country."

such as health and dental plans, or even job security.

NAC argues that if social programs are cut back, women's unpaid labour could make up the budgetary gap. The plight of domestic workers, usually immigrant women working illegally in the manufacturing sector, is worsening.

"Their [domestic workers'] reality is much harder than ours." Citing the tight immigration restrictions, Thobani said "We have to recognize that a whole

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EVENTS

Auditions for video "Supporting Cast" held tonight and tomorrow night in Arts 230 at 7pm. No Experience required. For more information, or if you can't make it either of these days, call Greg at 842-0470. Something by Sam Shephard or David Mamet is appropriate though not required

Black Students Network meeting today at 6pm. Shatner 107.

The International Relations Society's second general meeting will be at 6pm at 550 Sherbrooke, room 1175 tonight.

Corrupt Tories. What did they never tell you about corruption in Ottawa? A talk with elections candidates: Glenn Kealey, former Tory organizer and Hull developer turned corruption fighter, and Shelley Ann Clark, free trade fraud whistle-blower. Leacock room 232. Monday, October 18 at 7pm.

The Sexual Assault Centre of McGill (SACOM) now offers facilitated mutual aid support groups open to the Montreal community free of charge. Tonight two discussion groups will meet: Women Survivors of Domestic Violence and Men Survivors of Sexual Abuse. All groups meet in private rooms at McGill from 6:30-8:30pm. Call 398-2700 for more information.

National Student Day of Action to Save Clayoquot Sound Today! Rally meets at 11:30am at the Arts steps at McGill. March to Concordia for a 12:30 Hall Building rally. Clayoquot Sound is the largest area of lowland ancient temperate rain forest left on Earth, slated for clear cutting by the BC government. Contact Brenda at 845-4092 for more info. Slideshow and coffee house and open stage at Yellow Door. 8pm at 3635 Alymer.

McGill SIDE (Students for International Development Education) presents a talk on "Religion, Liberation and Development" on Thursday, October 14 at 6:30pm in Leacock 721. Speakers are Prof. Hilary Cunningham on "God and Caesar at the Rio Grande: Politicization of Religion" and Prof. Steven Scharper on "Latin American Liberation Theology and the Development Critique".

Thanksgiving over, only Christmas to look forward to? Check out the Outing Club — we hike, climb, canoe, cycle, sing, dance... meetings every Wednesday, 7:30pm, Leacock 26 or 132.

The McGill Centre for Developing Area Studies will host poet and writer Fahmida Riaz to speak on Muslim Women of the South Asian Subcontinent in Myth and Reality: the Literary Evidence. Tonight, 3pm, CDAS 3715 Peel St, room 100. Phone 398-3507.

The McGill Society of Montreal launches a new health lecture series today. McGill chemistry professors David Harpp and Joseph Schwarcz will speak on Food Hysteria in the '90s, tonight at 6:30-8:30pm, Martlet House, 3605 Mountain Street. Tickets are \$8. Light refreshments. Call 398-4534 for information and reservations.

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 The Student Aid Office is pleased to announce the continuation of the Work Study Program for the 1993-94 academic year. It is designed to provide part-time on-campus employment for full-time degree students who demonstrate financial need. Eligible employers will benefit from subsidized labour costs when work study students are hired.
 Work Study student applications are available at the Student Aid Office on both campuses.
 Applications should be returned to the Student Aid Office by October 15, 1993.
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Young New Democrats reckon with future

BY JOYA BALFOUR

As the New Democratic Party (NDP) creeps nearer to the edge of the political abyss in this federal election, it may have its most positive force in its youth wing. While the campaign is not a success, (i.e. who doesn't change the channel while those bitchy ads run?) its junior members know the future depends on them.

Alex Ng, federal secretary of the New Democratic Youth of Canada (NDYC) and former NDP McGill president, believes the NDP takes its youth wing seriously. "We are represented on all committees, on the federal council, [the governing body between levels] and we are active in policy formation."

The executive of the NDYC has an equitable representation. Of its twenty-three members, eleven are women, four are visible minorities, two are aboriginals and three are homosexual.

Twenty-five is the upper age limit for membership in the youth party. In this election, seventeen NDP candidates across Canada are under the age of twenty-five.

The NDYC started in 1936 in

Saskatchewan under the name The Cooperative Commonwealth Youth Movement. It disbanded in 1973 and was revived in 1988 under its present name. It has 10-12,000 members in all provinces and territories, with approximately 500 in Québec. Here, Les Jeunes Néo-Démocrates du Québec are active only on the federal level.

Students at McGill have actively been involved in the party. "McGill's got quite a reputation," says Ng, citing current candidates and NDP McGill members David D'Andrea and Christine Moore. D'Andrea is running in the Montréal riding of St-Leonard, and Moore wants to represent the NDP in Chicoutimi. D'Andrea spoke with *The Daily* about NDP McGill and the election.

"In Québec, we [NDP youth] carry a lot of clout. That's primarily because the party itself is relatively small here in Québec...there is relatively good youth participation compared to the general participation," said D'Andrea.

Out of fifty members at the last provincial convention, five were from NDP McGill and three were

from other youth organizations. The NDP does not set aside a certain number of seats for its youth members. They are elected through their riding associations.

"In terms of influencing party policies...you really can do things."

The British Columbia NDP has run into quite a bit of trouble with its youth wing currently. The youth came out to condemn the government over Clayoquot Sound. Whether or not we [in Québec] can have as much clout is a different story. The NDP youth does not hesitate to throw its weight around when necessary. We also have a lot of moral authority...and there's definitely something wrong if the youth as a whole are dead set against something that the party's doing. No matter what kind of crusty, old, cigar-smoking union leader you are, that's reason to talk about it."

D'Andrea declares that the main concerns of NDP youth are unemployment and the environment. The youth agenda emphasizes neglected issues: the environment, women's issues and gay/lesbian issues.

"The youth wing in Canada has been quite a bit ahead of the party

[on these issues]. We've taken pro-choice stances before the general party has. We've taken stronger pro-environmental stances. We've taken stronger pro-LGB stances before the party did, and on a lot of these issues the party has caught up with us."

Discouragement in the polls is a reality for the NDP in this election. D'Andrea believes that the youth in all parties ("with possible exceptions of some parties which shall remain unnamed," he says) join because they believe in the policies.

"The things that we're trying to fight this election on are pretty clear NDP policy. We oppose NAFTA, we're in favour of women's rights, the whole spectrum of things."

Many members at NDP McGill have been working for their candidate in St. Henri-Westmount, Ann Elborne. They also want the election to figure more on the McGill campus. If one looks around school these days, nobody would guess there is a federal election going on, besides the occasional poster on the Union billboard. NDP McGill wants this to change.

"The way the election's been fought so far, you've got all the bill-

boards out there and all these smiling faces and especially on campus, you should have more informed debate. You figure that students who are supposed to be informed should be thinking these things through at a level deeper than, 'Do I like Kim Campbell's fashion wardrobe?' or 'Do I like Jean Chrétien's accent?' So, we're trying to start getting to what the election's all about, which are the issues: free trade, employment, the environment, women's issues, LGB issues."

With the NDP so low in the polls, many people wonder if they will lose party status or disappear altogether. The principles behind a party are generally not lost on its youth, whereas long-time members might forget why they joined the party. D'Andrea feels that support for social democratic principles in Québec is strong enough to assure the survival of his party.

"The youth, who are a lot closer to the general [social democratic] principles, see a lot of support for those principles from the general population. Because we have those in mind, we don't see this [election] as being a death blow to the NDP."

The leader of the NDP, Audrey McLaughlin, was unusually quiet during the first two debates even though she was a force when she did interject.

"Audrey McLaughlin is not the most telegenic leader. She comes across a little bit stiff compared to the other leaders. What we're seeing here is tragic, we're seeing the triumph of style over substance," said D'Andrea.

D'Andrea sees an opening for the NDP. With the election now only two weeks away, the older parties are shifting to accommodate the Reform Party's surge in the polls and the domination of the Bloc Québécois in Québec. A change in rhetoric might change the electorate's opinion.

"Some political strategists might be saying we should have a slick campaign, and there's an unwillingness to do that," said D'Andrea. "You can't sell out your ideas just to get in office, because if you do that, what are you in office for?"

D'Andrea is honest when it comes to the failure of the NDP to get its message across. He feels that the party is pro-active in the debate rather than reactive, and this is why the NDP is largely being ignored. Still, he tries to focus on the positive.

"The reasons that the NDP exist are still around. They're not going away."

Alex Ng believes the youth is not just the future of the New Democratic Party.

"We're not just the future of the party; we're here today."

It looks like the youth has the heavy burden of trying to convince Canada that the NDP is not just a passing trend and that their policy is the best for all Canadians. If that is so, why does it seem otherwise to so many of us? Stay tuned on October 25th...

CLR James: a great mind of the 20th century

Part two of a series commemorating the Black Writer's Congress held at McGill in 1968

BY DAVE AUSTIN

The late CLR James is certainly one of the most remarkable people of this century, enriching the world as a writer, historian, political theorist, philosopher, and sports critic. Born in Port of Spain, Trinidad in 1909, he developed a profound interest in literature by the time he reached his teens.

A long time cricket fan, James advanced his skills as a writer by moving to London, England in 1932 to become a columnist for the *Manchester Guardian*. In 1938 he moved to the United States where he wrote and worked for several socialist and Trotskyite movements. Living among sharecroppers in Missouri, James completed two books, one about political theory, the other on Herman Melville.

It was in this period that James wrote *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Haitian Revolution*. Not only was this book a seminal work on that revolution, but it served as a blueprint for revolution in Africa, as he developed a number of themes and revolutionary concepts with the inspiration of African revolution in mind.

In the early 1940s, he met Kwame Nkrumah, leader of the 1957 revolution that pushed Ghana into independence. James took the young Nkrumah under his wing and taught him the fundamentals of socialist thought and pan-Africanism. Later James would serve as an advisor to Nkrumah during his days as prime minister of Ghana.

CLR James was expelled from the US in 1953 as an "undesirable alien" for his political views, after which he lived in both London and Trinidad. In London he took another person under his wing who would soon become an important figure in world politics, Eric Williams, first prime minister of an independent Trinidad. Williams proved to be a less grateful student than Nkrumah, and James would later organize an opposition party against his former protégé.

With the hard work of friends in Montréal, James was permitted to re-enter the United States. He had been a keynote speaker at the 1968 Black Writers Congress, sponsored by West Indian Students' Association of McGill University. In the United States and later in London he lectured and continued to write, one of his works being the much lauded book on cricket, *Beyond the Boundary*. He died in 1989, leaving an abundance of work in the making.

In anticipation of Caribbean and Garvey historian Bobby Hill's speaking engagement in Montréal on October 15th and 16th at the Universal Negro Improvement Association (2741 Notre Dame

West at 7:00pm), the *Daily* presents a reprint from Oct. 15, 1968 covering James' talk at the Black Writer's Congress. Hill was James' associate and the executor of his many unprinted and unfinished works.



C.L.R. James... revolutionary historian

Reprint from an article by Ian Urquhart:

"Socialize Bourgeois Knowledge" - James

Western society has a mass of technical information waiting to be released by revolution and used for the benefit of mankind. Black Marxist CLR James told an assembly of the Congress of Black Writers Saturday morning.

"10,000 years have passed in man's change from animality to humanity, and the conversion is not complete," James claimed. "We (the revolutionaries) must take knowledge away from the bourgeoisie and use it for humanity."

"Twenty-two million Negroes in America have said to the whites, 'You have to decide whether you are with us or against us in the strug-

gle for humanity.' If white America decides they are against us and try to suppress us, their society will be broken into pieces," warned the 67 year old James, prodding most of the 500 in attendance to rise and applaud.

James, a native of Trinidad who joined the vanguard of the Black Power movement during his campaign for African independence in the 1930's, made his militant remarks during a speech entitled "The History and Economics of Slavery in the New World."

Continued on Page 6

COMMENT

Low low price! Buy a soul at Benetton

Something is seriously fucked with advertizing these days.

Remember Benetton, who started the sick trend of 'no need to represent the product, just play on people's emotions' advertising? Their full page photo of a man in the last stages of AIDS, stamped with the perky green Benetton logo, springs immediately to mind.

What the fuck? Trendy pastel sweaters, and AIDS?? I don't get it...

Some say that Benetton's ad strategies are brilliant — by completely severing the depicted image in the ad from the actual market product, Benetton has carried 90's advertising to its logical conclusion.

Take for example Marlboro ads. The actual cigarette is the least important aspect of these ads. The focus is on Marlboro Man himself, that rough-hewn cowboy stud of the mountains. The ads create a fantasy world drawing consumers in, not via the actual product, but through the Marlboro stud myth which many people find appealing, I guess.

People also say that Benetton ads raise awareness about important political and social issues. Personally, I think that's a crock of shit. The ads play on human misery and offend people's suffering. No matter which way you cut it, advertising is ultimately about *selling*, not educating...

Anyway, Benetton doesn't really deserve all this attention (by writing about them, I'm probably giving them exactly the publicity they want...)

Let's turn instead to the twisted wave of ads which has sprung up of late in US magazines. Inspired by Benetton, no doubt.

The ads I'm talking about are annoyingly transparent, and the research done on 'target markets' for them is painfully visible. For the most part, the market in question is *us* — the so-labelled (sorry to use the term) Generation Xers, slackers, 'privileged poor' (as the *Ume Reader* put it).

Picture if you will, advertising excess sitting around a nice big mahogany table, throwing out ideas which might appeal to us, their target market.

"Grunge, now there's an idea," says one stuffed shirt. "What about bunjee-jumping?" says another, soon to lose his job. Finally, Clever Dick hits it, "I know! They don't like to be labelled!"

Sound familiar? If it does, then you've seen this month's *Details* magazine, with an ad by a relatively unknown company (to be left unnamed) that reads as follows: "There is no Generation X. There is no (blah blah, fill in the blank)... There is only our generation. And for some reason, the Post War Baby Boomer Yuppies seem to think that since they have been so heavily labeled (sic), that we need to be also. Wrong! We're fine without it... Stay cool. We know who we are. Peace." The ad is stamped with a big LABEL of the company's name. Hmmm...

The intended message is, 'we understand, as hip and with it as we are, that you don't like to be labelled. That's why we want you to wear our label'.

(The real message is, don't touch this company with a ten-foot pole...)

It gets worse. I really don't know where to begin with this 'Wasp, Jew, Gay' ad. It scares me, it's a hollow appropriation of PC ideas, demonstrating exactly how far PC has strayed from its original intentions.

It is identity politics appropriated by Satan. Only this time, the devil doesn't want to buy your soul, but to sell it.

Liz Unna
Kristin Andrews

LETTERS

Graphics

To the Daily:

Graphic elements often subtly signify meaning more than any well-crafted text. The October 6th issue of the McGill Daily is a good example of this. The series on the Palestinian/Israeli peace accord is complimented with a graphic. The graphic element displays the Jewish star of David and the Islamic crescent. Underneath this graphic element

are the words, "The peace process." What is wrong with this is that the Palestinian people includes a sizable minority of Christians that has been much ignored in media discussions on the peace process. The ever politically aware/correct daily should surely know better

Hadley Stern
U3 Visiting
The Progressive Zionist Caucus

Censorship

To the Daily:

In response to Dan Robins' October 6 article of Customs censorship, I have little respect for the editorial board of the Daily for even allowing such an empty article to be published. Yes, Canadian Customs' censorship of published material is a problem in principle, it goes against peoples' civil liberties. I feel; as an adult, I should be able to read what ever I want to read; with the exception that the material doesn't violate someone else's civil liberties (child pornography for example). The Canadian Gov-

ernment is not the keeper of my morality; I am. Your article was written to ask for support against censoring, but it would be nice to know what exactly Customs is censoring. For example, I know that magazines that depict sexual violence, or child pornography are banned or blacked out for the Canadian market, but how much further does censorship go? What are we fighting for? What is the government not allowing us to read? Is a certain level of censorship good? None of these questions were addressed in your article. The second paragraph of your article states: "[Bookstores are]... handing out pamphlets and setting up displays in their shops to high-

light the largely hidden practices of Canada Customs." Mr. Robins that was part of your story; unfortunately, you have succeeded keeping the nature of said "practices hidden" a mystery.

D Lawrence Tarazano
Post Doctoral Fellow
Dept. of Chemistry

Hair

Dear McGill Daily Letters,
I resent the portrayal of Matthew Da Costa with a 'white' style haircut in your October 4 special edition.
Rachel Hammonds



HYDE PARK

Peace process: true colours show in desperation

An opinion by the Daniel Koffler, TAGAR/BETAR Montreal

I'm still trying to catch my breath. The events of the past month have been astounding. From Palestinians screaming at the world press that the PLO is *not* the soul legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to Israeli and Saudi Arabian IMF representatives locking themselves in a room alone for two hours, to Rabin and Arafat meeting face to face — twice — and Rabin pledging \$25 million of Israeli state funds to the PLO.

The prospects for a true peace have never been brighter.

The rejectionists have never been more desperate. True colours show in desperation.

No one was surprised when Hamas supporter Sheikh Fathy Moussa from Gaza told *the Globe and Mail* on Sept. 21, "The Koran says that before the Muslims can triumph, all the Jews must be gathered in Palestine. This so-called 'peace' will encourage many of them to come here now. And when they do, the Muslims around the world will finally assemble, and crush the Israeli state."

People familiar with the Middle East expect no less from Hamas (this past weekend two Israeli hikers were murdered and mutilated by Hamas activists). There have been some surprises, however.

On the Israeli front, Likud has officially changed its position calling the accord a *fait accompli* and waiting for further developments. More interesting is the case of the *Women in Black*. Who would have thought a bunch of left wing Israeli women would have the gall to tell Arafat they know better than he does about what's in the Palestinian's best interest?

On the Palestinian front, the PLO is hardly the PLO anymore. The PFLP, the DFLP, the PSF, the PLF, and a good chunk of Arafat's Fatah party, including Col. Munir Makdah (head of Fatah military forces in Lebanon) and the president of the Palestinian National Council (The PNC is the PLO's "government in exile") have denounced the accord, called the meeting of the PNC on Monday illegal and have met to formulate a strategy to "protect the national struggle" (UPI 10 Oct.). The question now is whether this diminished PLO will be able to keep its commitments.

Since the signing there have already been two assassination attempts against Arafat, and he has arrested 20 of his bodyguards for being sympathetic to the opposition.

Even at McGill where the PLO was often viewed as a sacred cow among the Palestinian/Arab communitie, the myth has been shattered. In a press release sent out by the *North American Muslim Organizations* and signed by the *Muslim Students' Association of McGill* (under the banner of MSA in US and Canada), declaring the accord illegal, and among other things the "fact that Israel is the occupation of Palestinian lands." Calling into question whether MSA McGill even believes in the right of Israel to exist.

The accord is a monumental leap of faith for both sides. As an interim agreement it is also a test of faith on both sides. This is the ultimate confidence building measure. The only question that remains is will good will on both sides bring it to fruition or will the rejectionists throw us back into the *status quo* or worse?

LETTERS

SINCE 1911
Vol. 83 No. 21

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THE MCGILL DAILY

Envisioning Change

An interview with Sunera Thobani, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women

BY SITA KUMAR

Sunera Thobani, a 36-year-old single mother and BC.-based South Asian activist, took over the presidency of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) by acclamation this June.

She replaced Judy Rebick, the outspoken and independent-minded former NAC leader, and has since encouraged a more collective approach to the organization. Thobani immigrated from Tanzania to England, to the US, and finally settled in Vancouver where she has worked with the Vancouver Status of Women (VSW), and the South Asian Women's Action Network (SAWAN) as well as a number of other women's groups.

As leader of Canada's largest feminist lobby group, she comes under fire not only because of her strong feminist viewpoints, but also because she is the first woman of colour to become the president of NAC.

Daily: The focus of the media has concentrated on Sunera Thobani, the woman of colour, rather than the political career of Sunera Thobani. Can you tell us more about your political activism instead of how the media is portraying you?

Sunera Thobani: I think my earliest political activism was around issues of anti-racism when I was living in Britain. I belonged to some groups who did international solidarity work and anti-racist work in London. After that, through the changes in my own life and through working with organizations, I moved more and more towards joining the women's movement and seeing that as the principle of my activism and my energy.

Daily: One of the issues that you have taken on is New Reproductive Technologies (NRT). How did you initially get started with that?

ST: I worked with the BC. Coalition of Abortion Clinics and I am very much of an abortion rights activist. I knew nothing about New Reproductive Technologies. Then, there was a doctor [John Stephens] who was trying to open a sex selection clinic in Vancouver, BC. and he was targeting the South Asian Community. That is where my interest in NRT started because I heard about it and knowing that in many places in the world, this technology is used to abort female fetuses, I was quite alarmed that this was going to happen here in Canada, and so I was active in organizing a petition to go against this clinic. As well, at that time the Royal Commission on NRT had also been appointed and was traveling across the country. Once I started working with sex selection, I found

out more about the other NRT and I found the whole issue very frightening. I realized the women's movement had not paid as much attention to this very serious threat which is coming from NRT.

Daily: Did you receive any backlash from the South Asian community itself and other communities because you did not want the sex selection clinic to open up?

ST: At that time there were a number of women and men who felt that we should not be responding to what this doctor was doing because the way the whole thing was being constructed was very racist in the sense that it was labeling the South Asian community as being a misogynist one. A lot of people say that by responding we will give that argument credibility; that this kind of thing is happening inside the South Asian community. So in that sense there was a lot of concern and there were people who wished that we would all keep quiet because whatever we said would be used against the whole community. I felt that if we did not speak out and if we did not try to oppose it, then how could we begin to stop this kind of thing from targeting our communities? In that sense, yes, there was some resistance and people did not want to discuss it and did not see it as a positive thing to be organizing against this clinic.

Daily: With our federal election coming up, what are some issues that you would like to see addressed by the political parties?

ST: Certainly women's poverty, unemployment, changes to the immigration laws which the Tory government brought in, violence against women, and an affordable and accessible child care are issues the parties should be addressing.

Daily: How would you attempt to bring these issues, such as violence against women, to the forefront of political campaigns?

ST: We have launched a voter's guide where we have listed issues which we think are central to women's equality, and the different political parties positions on these areas. We are putting out a lot of educational material which will be distributed through our membership. We are also mobilizing our membership to go to all candidate's meetings, to go to all town hall meetings, and keep raising the questions again and again. At the national level, we have had several press conferences putting out the questions we want addressed. In Toronto last week we had a forum on the

debt, the deficit and women and we use these events to get attention to where women are concerned.

Daily: How did the political parties respond to ANC's proposal of a debate between the political parties on women's issues alone? Is such a meeting going to take place?

ST: It looks very unlikely. It is a reflection on the parties and their position on women's issues in the sense that they don't think it is important enough for their leaders to be addressing. Having said that I should say that the NDP was the only party that agreed to participate in the women's debate. It just goes to show how low women rank in their priorities.

Daily: How is your leadership different from that of Judy Rebick's?

ST: The way I operate is very different from that of Judy's. In terms of the priorities of the organization, I don't think they have changed that much but in terms of working, I am totally committed to working in a collective style with member organizations. I want to see a much more active participation by the membership in the work of the organization. For me, moving from a very hierarchical structure and style of working to a more collective one is a contribution I can make.

Daily: A vision of yours is to strengthen NAC at the regional level. How do you propose taking this on?

ST: On the NAC executive, we have regional representatives from every part of the country. At the national level, we are trying to put more money into regional organizing. Structures are emerging in the provinces such as regional steering committees and this is strengthening our work collectively.

Daily: From what I gather, dissension about your presidency has stemmed from those outside of NAC, such as the media, rather than within the organization itself. Is this true?

ST: Yes, the most opposition came from outside and not inside NAC. In terms of the media, we have managed to turn some of their curiosity/hostility around. In that sense I think the media's attitude towards me has changed. At first I was concerned that they might set me up as being able to speak only on

DAILY PHOTO: JENNIFER BAIN



Sunera Thobani speaks at McGill

issues of race and that would continue to be the focus of attention; but it hasn't. So, I think the media's coverage has shifted in how they are covering NAC and myself. In terms of within the organization, I clearly had the support of the membership otherwise we would not have been able to survive the attacks that we had when I became president.

Daily: Do you feel that by being a woman of colour, groups have opened up to you and have been less intimidated to participate with NAC?

ST: Yes, I am definitely finding that. Not just in groups but in individual women as well. The other thing is that when there was all of the "hoo-ha" about me being the president and an immigrant, the commitment of the organization to not back down showed people that NAC stands up for the rights of immigrants and people of colour, and that NAC would not give in to pressure from outside. So, it is partly me being in that position, but it is also the organization's position to not back down that made people see that this is a place where they would want to put their support in.

Daily: What kind of support would you like to see from the groups and individuals that participate with NAC right now?

ST: In terms of the groups who don't belong to NAC, I would really like them to join NAC and become active. I want us to talk about building alliances, forming coalitions, and so on. There have been changes at the level of the executive with me becoming president but those changes need to happen on the ground. For example, with anti-racist work and with making the organization less hierarchical, they need to happen on the ground. A common question is, "How do we build alliances which will overcome the divisions?" We do have differences. There are levels of hierarchy even amongst women so how do we build alliances which are real and which take into account all of those divisions and differences? Where we find forms of commonality, we are able to work together. I see this happening at the executive level but I would really like this to happen in all of the organizations which belong to NAC.

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C.L.R. James

Continued from Page 3

In one of the few comments germane to his topic, James stated that slavery has created a foundation for revolution. For without slavery, said James, there would have been no cotton to feed the industrial revolution, and accordingly, no proletariat to lead a

political revolution and no bourgeoisie to be a target for that revolution.

"Without understanding slavery it is impossible to understand history," James concluded.

While fielding questions from his puzzled audience, James praised African civilization, describing it as a base for recent Negro advancement.

"The blacks could only be doing

what they are doing now if they brought something substantial with them when they came to North America," James explained.

Taking this tangent, James pointed out two other civilizations he admires, Cuba and ancient Greece.

"Cuba represents the finest advance made in modern history since the decline of the Russian Revolution," he said to the delight of his audience.

But he told a not-so-delighted audience that the Hellenic civilization represents man's highest achievements.

Athen's opulence rested on the backs of oppressed slaves.

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Education

Continued from page 1

...Dupont.

But Fred Wilson, a past president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, said that regardless of the government's plans, the provinces are constitutionally responsible for education policy. The federal government limited to providing funding, research support and student aid, he said.

Wilson also questioned whether linking labour market needs and post-secondary education is in the best interests of students. "No one has been able to accurately predict the needs of the labour market... and students tend to do best when they are studying what they want to, rather than something that is intended to lead them to be employed."

Jean Swanson, a worker with the Vancouver-based End Legislated Poverty group, agreed, saying the restructuring could result in the purpose of universities being refocused towards skills training alone.

"If they make unemployment insurance contingent on taking a course, you'll have education geared towards corporations' interests. We could end up with a privatized version of education without any humanitarian or arts component," said Swanson.

According to some student advocacy groups, the restructuring of post-secondary education within the Human Resources department could also mean that demands for student aid reform and increased post-secondary funding will have less impact on the federal government's policies.

"The overall effect will be to dilute the importance of post-secondary education in the portfolio," said Emechete Onouha, president of the Ontario branch of the Canadian Federation of Students.

While Onouha praised the portfolio's emphasis on job training, he said he was also cautious about the impact the restructuring could have on income security programs.

"There's the idea of encouraging laid-off workers to re-train, but the restructuring takes place as part of the government's cost-cutting measures. So the question is, will the government pay for that retraining or will the money come from current unemployment insurance benefits?"

Ads may be placed through the Daily Business Office, Room B-17, University Centre, 9h00-14h00. Deadline is 14h00, two working days prior to publication. McGill Students (with valid ID): \$3.50 per day, 4 or more consecutive days, \$2.75 per day (\$11.00 per week). McGill Employees (with staff card) \$4.50 per day, 4 or more consecutive days, \$3.75 per day (\$15.00 per week). All others: \$5.00 per day, or \$4.25 per day for 4 or more consecutive days (\$17.00 per week). *Extra charges may apply, and prices do not include applicable GST or PST.* For more information, please visit our office in person or call 398-6790 - **WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE.**

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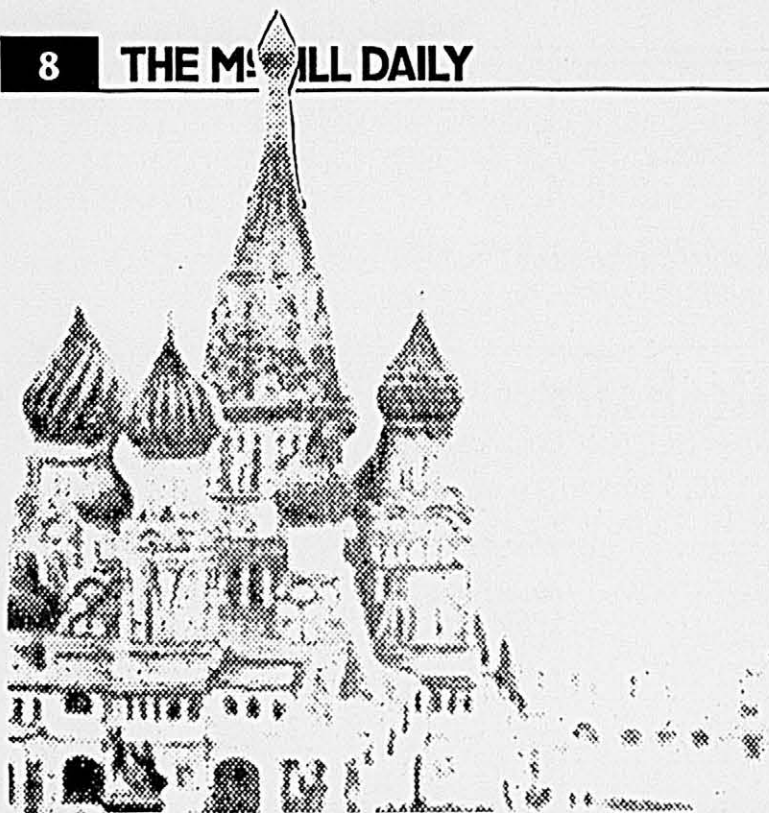
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Out with the old, in with the old

Changing street signs to their former names becomes a frenzy in post-Soviet Russia

BY AUBREY COHEN

St Petersburg—You thought it was hard to find Dorchester St and the Carion building? Try finding most of the streets in the centre of a Russian city with an old Soviet map. Chances are you won't have much luck.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union a few years ago, much has changed in Russia. Some of the most obvious — and the most confusing — of these changes have been the changes of names.

The victims of this sign-swapping frenzy are many. In St. Petersburg alone, a list of all the street names which have been changed takes up 13 pages of a street directory. Soviet names like "Lenin's prospect" have been changed to "Hero's prospect." "Mayday street" has gone back to "Andreyevskaya Street," and street of "Red Electricians" has been converted back to its former name in honour the Cossack Chieftan Antamanskaya. It's called "Antamanskaya street."

On a grander scale, cities such as Leningrad and Gorky have returned to their historical names of St. Petersburg and Nizhny Novgorod respectively.

Even Boris Yeltsin would have a hard time finding his hometown of Sverdlovsk unless he knew to look for L'Estarsberg.

As the saying goes, "It's Istanbul not Constantinople..."

In this "new era" of "freedom and democracy" in Russia, who made these decisions?

Bella Gribora, of the international department of Nizhny Novgorod State University, commented on the name change in her city.

"It was democratic. There were regional meetings all over the city at which the local deputies of the city soviet were present, then the city soviet voted to change the name back to Nizhny Novgorod."

"It was only when there was an historical name that was changed during the Soviet period that we changed it back," explained Gribora.

When the original name was a Soviet one, not so many are eager to change it.

"We are not ashamed of our past," said Gribora. "It's not like we are rejecting the leaders of the Soviet period."

Maxine Karolinski, a student in St. Petersburg, echoed this sentiment, "Why think up new names? History is history, good or bad, it cannot be erased."

Some of the original Soviet names which have not been changed in Nizhny Novgorod are "the Park of 60 years of October," "Lenin Square," and the metro stations "Proletarskaya (Proletarian)," "Engine of the Revolution," and "Komsomol Square (Komsomol was the youth league of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.)"

In St. Petersburg, you can still take the metro to Komsomol, Lenin, and Proletarskaya station.

When it comes to these names, not everyone wants them to remain.

"I think these names should be changed, they are absurd now," said Nadya Ernera, a student in Nizhny Novgorod.

Even if the decision was made to change these Soviet names, that would not be the end of it. The problem then becomes what the new name should be.

"I don't know what to change them to, I think the government does not know either."

It may be that, at a time when there are many serious problems to be dealt with in Russia, the government does not want to be bothered with thinking of new names. Perhaps, with Yeltsin's apparent victory over his hardline opponents, Red square may turn into a shade of a different colour.



NDP serious about women in parliament

Agnes Macphail fund supports female candidates

BY TARA CHARRAN

Almost half of the female candidates in the federal election are running under the banner of the New Democratic Party (NDP). The 113 NDP women candidates are campaigning thanks to the Agnes Macphail Fund.

The fund was started in 1983 to give financial assistance to women candidates at the federal level. Aiming to reduce financial obstacles, the \$1 200 grant is provided to women after nomination. It depends entirely on individual donations from men and women all over Canada.

Ann Elborne, NDP candidate for St. Henri-Westmount claims it was the deciding factor for her to enter politics. "I would not have run without it," she said.

The fund is intended to deflect the costs of child care, household help, and replace wages sacrificed to campaigning and paying for important campaign costs.

Dawn Black, the NDP critic on the status of women and child care said, "Running for office imposes an incredible personal and financial burden on a woman. The Agnes Macphail Fund makes it easier for women to run for the party."

Ms. Elborne, a teacher, campaigns at the end of the school day.

With grown children and no need for child care, she has put the money towards the \$1 000 candi-

date fee, and a separate phone line.

In 1983 the New Democratic Party enshrined gender parity in the Party Constitution, instilling a minimum of 50 percent female membership in the federal executive and committees.

Women's issues are a priority in the NDP mandate. Concerned that over two million Canadian women live below the poverty line, and that

cratic Party. Besides being an advocate for women's rights, she fought for an organized welfare system, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, prison reform, and equal-pay legislation.

Currently in Parliament only 13 percent of MP's are women, holding 39 out of the 295 seats. The Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois have one female MP



Currently in Parliament only 13 percent of MP's are women, holding 39 out of the 295 seats. The Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois have one female MP each, the NDP has 5, the Liberal's 12, and 20 for the Tories.

women still earn 67 cents for every dollar earned by men, the NDP have committed themselves to promoting equality for women. Their federal party platform includes equal pay and opportunity at work, reproductive choice, and a systemic effort to end violence against women.

The fund is dedicated to Agnes Campbell Macphail who in 1931 became the first woman elected to Canada's federal parliament. She said to the House of Commons in 1931, "What women really want today is perfect equality with men."

Macphail represented the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the precursor the New Demo-

each, the NDP has 5, the Liberal's 12, and 20 for the Tories.

While the Liberals and Tories also have funds for women candidates, their parties have not succeeded in attracting the same support. The Liberals' Judy LaMarsh fund sponsored 64 women candidates, and the Conservative's Ellen Fairclough Foundation aided 68 federal hopefuls.

The Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois have no special funding designated to help bring more women onto their teams to better represent the Canadian voting population. For this federal election they have 22 and 10 female candidates, respectively.